

# PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATIONS

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1. Always negotiate from strength. Recognize strengths, sources of leverage, and points of vulnerability for both your group and your opponent. Don't sacrifice your leverage before or during negotiations. The negotiation process usually simply concretizes what you can or already have won through collective, direct action.
2. Timing is key. Analyze advantages/disadvantages for your group and your opponent along time dimensions. Set the negotiating timeline accordingly.
3. Your group must reach consensus on its demands. Do good basic research. Get your facts straight and documented. Try to keep things simple. Prioritize goals. Decide on the bottom-line. Evaluate alternatives. Set up the process by which new options and final agreements will be approved.
4. Design an alternative plan of action. What will the group do if opponents fail to agree on these demands? The group needs a strategy to force opponents back to the bargaining table. This usually entails an escalation of pressure. You have to be able to up the ante.
5. Select a negotiating team. Divide up specific roles and responsibilities, including any staff functions. Choose a spokesperson and team leader.
6. Develop a game plan. Analyze the self interests of opponents; anticipate their moves and counter moves. (Remember "The Seven D's of Defense") Where are they most likely to concede or resist? Develop multiple arguments to support your position. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Have a plan for a series of orderly fallback positions all the way to the bottom-line.
7. Role play beforehand. Prepare for a variety of scenarios. Make sure that each member of the team knows his/her role and responsibilities.
8. Establish the basic ground rules with the opposition. Only negotiate with people who have clear decision-making power, not subordinates or intermediaries. Your turf is best, neutral turf next best. Get agreement on the basic agenda and the sequence of items to be discussed - think this through strategically beforehand. Don't let the press in during negotiations.
9. Be conscious and proactive around physical space issues, if on an opponent's turf, don't use their office when you can get a "neutral" room. Never let an opponent sit behind a desk. If the table is rectangular or oval, your spokesperson should move assertively to one end. Seating of other team members also should be strategic.
10. At the beginning of the session take control! Review the agenda and reestablish the ground rules. Agree on the time for ending.

11. Don't get sidetracked on unimportant issues. STAY FOCUSED! Force opponents to negotiate on your specific demands. Be proactive, not reactive. If opponents have counter-proposals, get them out on the table. If your opponent is not seriously dealing with your points, then the negotiating process is not really taking place.
12. Be conscious of style. Don't over-react (ex. enthusiasm, intimidation, confusion) to the opponent's style (ex. friendly and informal, menacing, hyper and scattered) - substance is what counts. "No" is spelled the same way whether delivered with a smile, a frown, or a bob and a weave. Decide beforehand on your own team's style(s), which may vary according to the situation and the role of the particular team member. Above all, observe and utilize style strategically.
13. Team members should control emotions to some degree - although a little anger or frustration may be both therapeutic and tactically sound. Calculated outbursts may be part of the game plan but obviously have to be credible.
14. Caucus whenever confusion, disagreement, or the need for changes in the game plan seem to exist. Don't genuinely argue in front of opponents. Have prearranged processes to initiate a caucus.
15. Know when to go back to the streets if necessary. Remember that changes usually aren't won on their rational merits but rather because of your power to force concessions. Know the source of your leverage and don't give it up until you have what your group wants.
16. Keep written records of what is agreed to. Define agreements in your own words (rather than the opponent's) whenever possible.
17. Make sure to follow your group's processes for accountability to the membership. How much power has the team been entrusted with? Do they have to go back to the members for approval? (This can be a good tactic to get out of a session that is not going well).
18. Set enforcement mechanisms for any agreement that is reached. Get everything down in writing and establish processes to ensure that there is follow-through.
19. When finished, continue to deal with opponents strategically. Allow them to save face; don't gloat over victories. Leave when done; don't fraternize too much. Remember there may be other battles.
20. Now deal with the press and media if appropriate. Decide whether and how opponents should be included. But make sure that your group clearly defines the results.
21. Evaluate the negotiating process with the team, emphasizing strengths as well as weaknesses. If there are multiple sessions, debrief each time, assess where things are at, and make a plan for the next meeting. The evaluation process follows the same guidelines as used to examine other organizational actions.
22. Celebrate victories with both team members and the general membership!